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ABSTRACT

The booklet tells the story of Josephine, a little Choctaw girl, who picks wild flowers and hurts her Aunt's feelings. Josephine later learns from her grandmother the importance of respecting nature and how the flowers came to be. The story introduces constellations, how weaving came to the Choctaw, how the sick were prayed for, and why wild flowers symbolize tokens of love from the Sacred Spirit. This booklet is supplementary reading material for the "Choctaw Culture Early Education Activities" guide. The guide provides activities pertaining to the story. (ERB)

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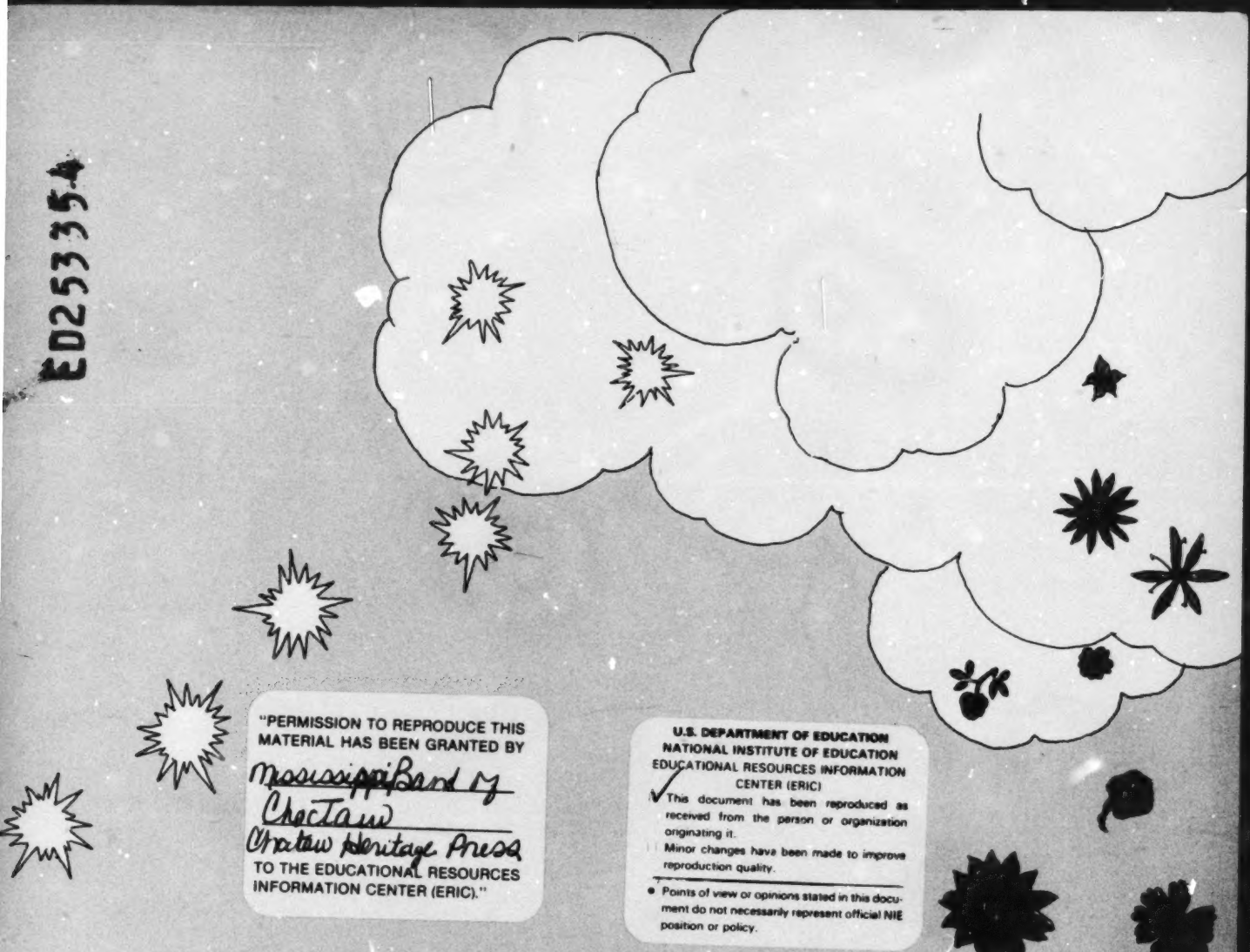

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How The Flowers Came To Be

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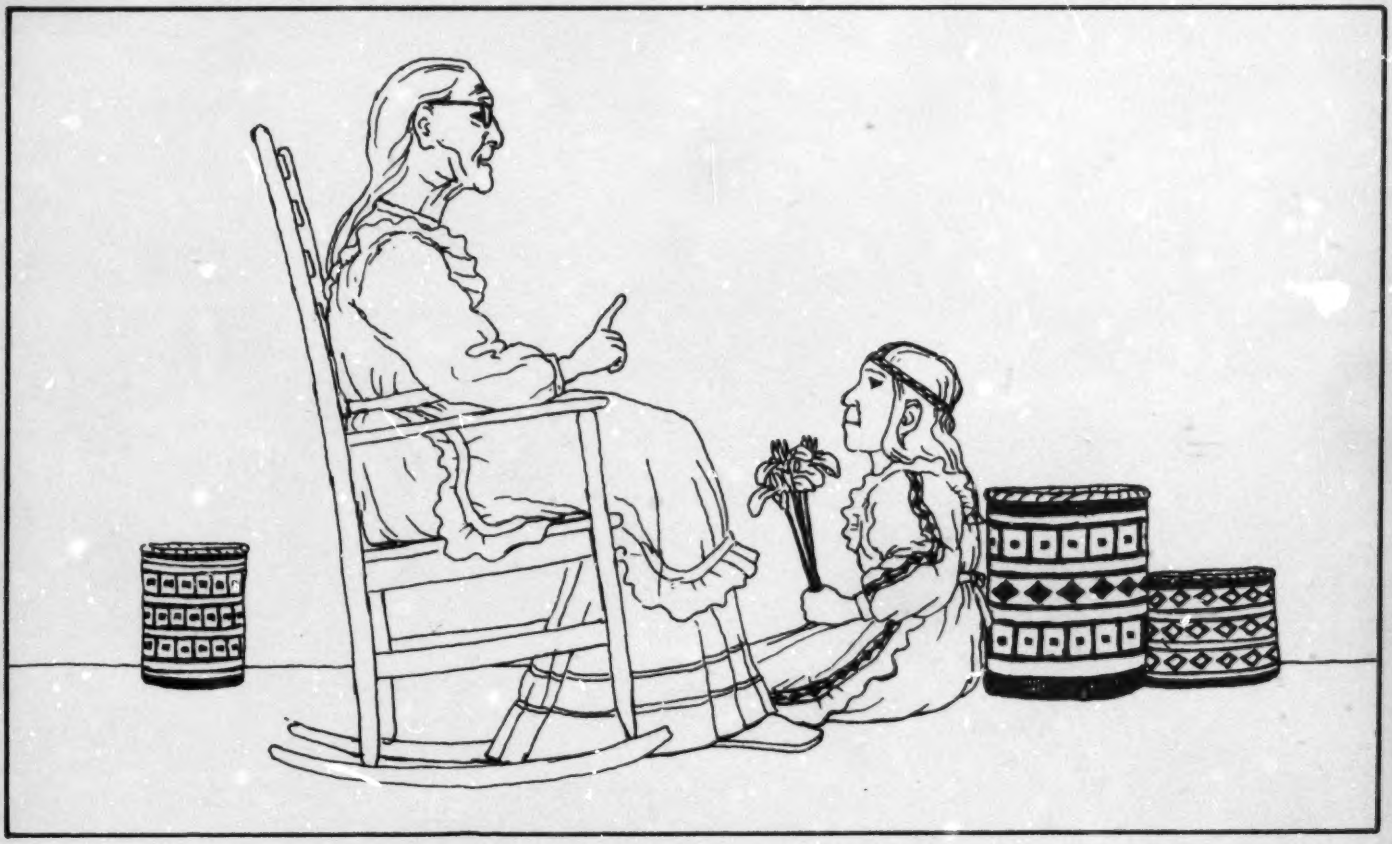
One day little Josephine went with her Aunt Selee to look at her grandmother's flower garden.

Josephine thought her aunt would like some of the flowers so she started picking some. When her aunt saw Josephine, she called, "Satopah! Issa!" (That hurts! Quit!) Then she began to cry.

Josephine was distressed and puzzled. She ran into the house to her grandmother.

"Grandmother," she said, almost in tears, "why is Aunt Selee crying? I did not touch her but she called to me, "That hurts! Quit!"

"I understand," replied her grandmother as she saw the flowers in Josephine's hand.

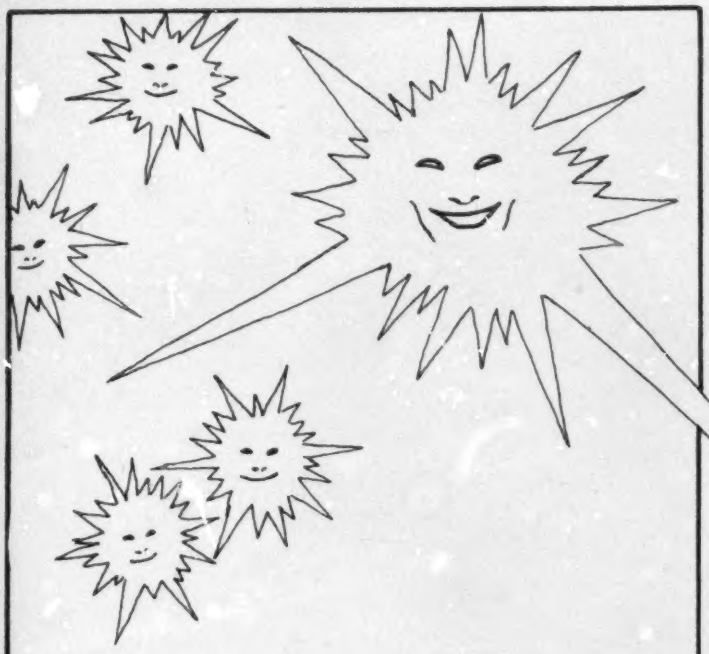


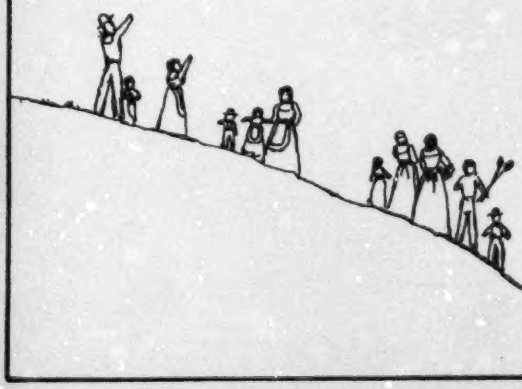
"Would you like to have these flowers, Grandmother?" Josephine asked when she saw her looking at them. "I broke them for Aunt Selee but I don't think she would want them now."

"No, Josephine, she wouldn't. The people love the wild and the garden flowers but they never pick them."

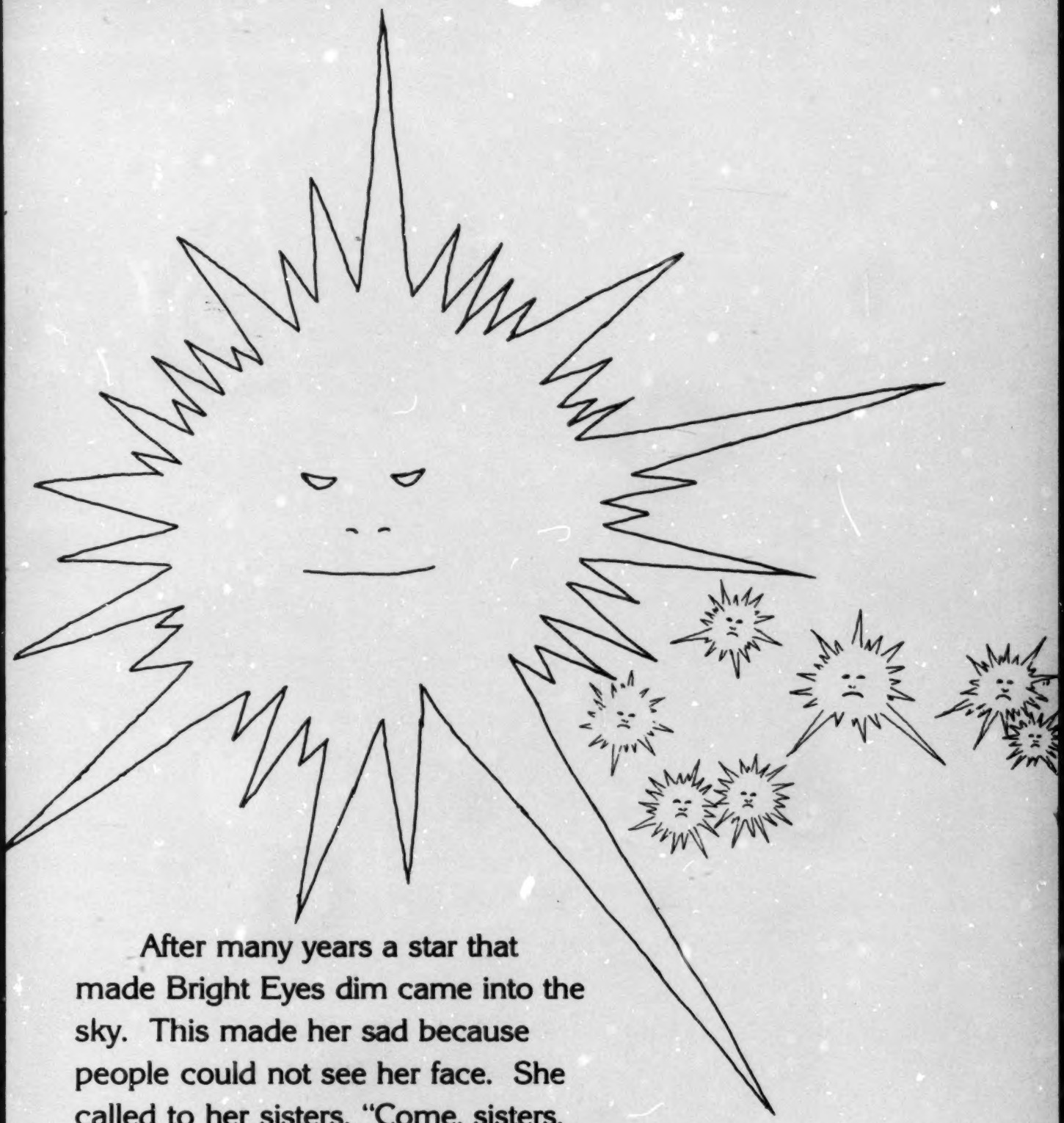
"But, Grandmother, they are so pretty!"

"You do not understand, child. Let's sit here and I'll tell you why."

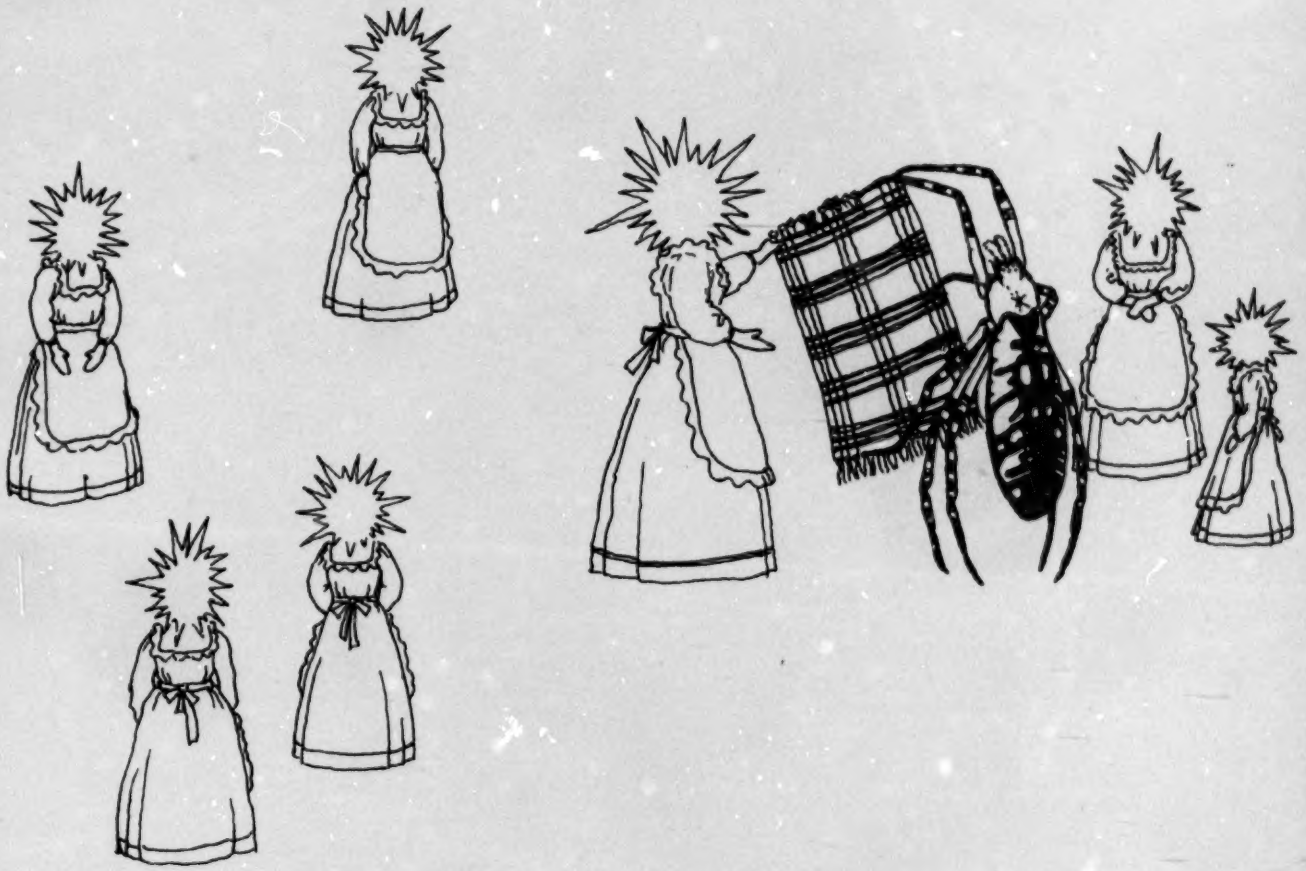




"Long ago when the world was young, there was in the heavens a constellation where shone the brightest star in all the sky. This beautiful star, Bright Eyes, was happy because earth people loved her beauty.



After many years a star that made Bright Eyes dim came into the sky. This made her sad because people could not see her face. She called to her sisters, "Come, sisters, let us go down to earth where we can live with the earth people and make them happy. The new star has hidden my light and the sky does not need us any longer."

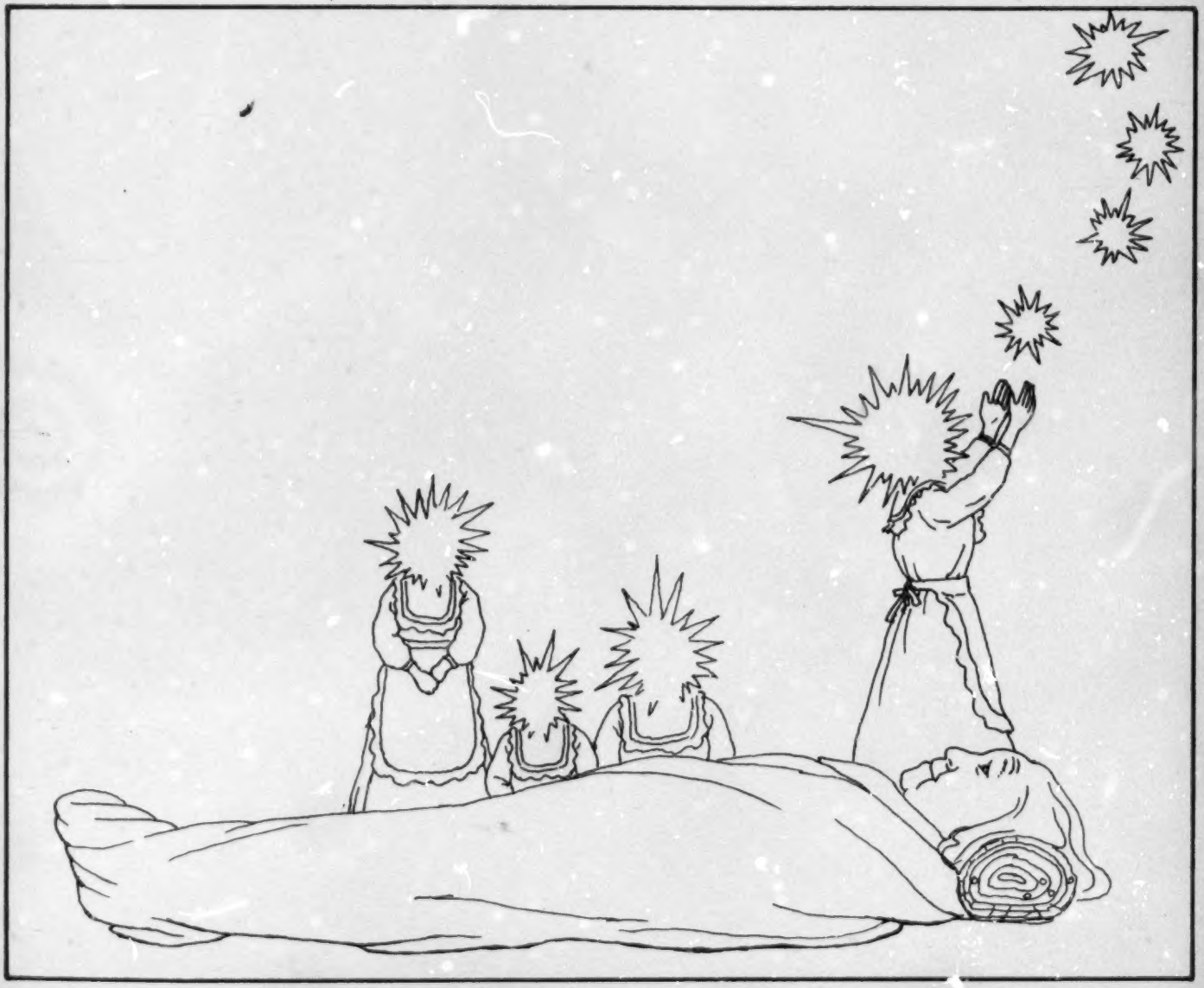


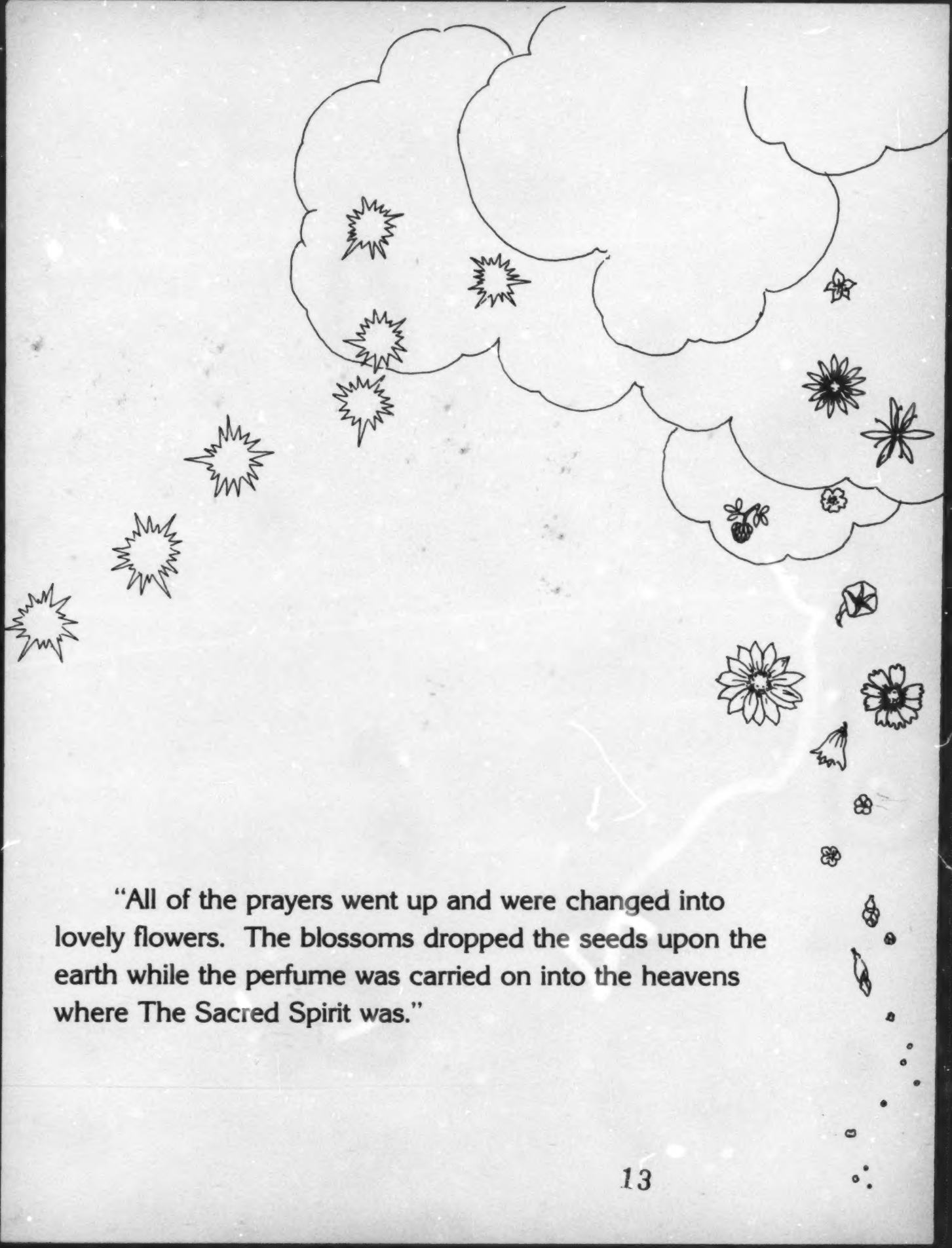
"On their way to earth, Bright Eyes and her sisters stopped where lived Uncta, the great bronze spider, spinner of the finest webs. 'We must learn to spin if Uncta will teach us,' said Bright Eyes. He was proud of his spinning and weaving and was glad to teach the maidens. He set them to work and soon they were able to spin beautiful threads and weave them into fine cloth. 'You and your sisters have done well,' Uncta told Bright Eyes."

"Bright Eyes said to Uncta one day, 'Will you help us get to earth? We want to teach the people how to spin and weave.' He wove a basket and fastened it to a strong thread to lower them to earth."

"When they touched the earth, they became the Little Folk. They loved the forests; and there they lived, working, dancing and playing. Earth people learned quickly to spin and weave. Then the Little Folk taught them how to make bright colors and use them in weaving their rugs and blankets. Earth people loved these Little Folk who helped them and Bright Eyes was happy again."

"Bright Eyes and her sisters helped the people when they were sick. They went into the forests to pray to The Sacred Spirit to protect the people. They told the people to pray to The Sacred Spirit too."





"All of the prayers went up and were changed into lovely flowers. The blossoms dropped the seeds upon the earth while the perfume was carried on into the heavens where The Sacred Spirit was."

"The Little Folk cared for the seeds as they fell and from them sprang the wild flowers. They watched and tended the flowers and still do today. The people love the flowers and respect them by not picking them thoughtlessly.

And so, my little granddaughter, our people love the flowers, but we take care of them. We call them "Tokens of love from The Sacred Spirit."

"Oh," said Josephine, "after this I will think of the flowers first."

How The Flowers Came To Be

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